BIA Students: Learning Today to Become Leaders Tomorrow

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: August 6, 2003
Print PDF

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin today announced that August 2003 is "Back to School Month" for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funded schools. "August is the time of year when BIA school administrators and teachers are hard at work preparing for the coming school year," Martin said. "These dedicated professionals provide our students with the foundation they need to achieve personal growth and academic success. BIA students are learning what they need today to become Indian Country's leaders of tomorrow."

This month Acting Assistant Secretary Martin will visit Baca Community School in Prewitt, N.M., to view its new facility, which is scheduled to open in time for the 2003-2004 school year. In addition, other BIA schools will be holding a variety of activities and events to welcome students and their families back to the classroom.

There are 185 BIA-funded elementary and secondary day and boarding schools serving approximately 48,000 Indian students living on or near 63 reservations in 23 states. In School Year 2001-2002, the BIA directly operated one-third of its schools with the remaining two-thirds tribally-operated under BIA contracts or grants. The BIA also directly operates two postsecondary institutions of higher learning and provides funding to 25 tribally-controlled colleges and universities. In addition, the BIA offers financial assistance grants to Indian undergraduate and graduate students through, respectively, tribal scholarship programs and the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) in Albuquerque, N.M.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities to individual and tribal trust beneficiaries, as well as promoting the self-determination and economic well-being of the nation's 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is responsible for providing education and social services to approximately 1.4 million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.

-DOI-